

Claims

[c1] A method of status enquiry between a plurality of subscriber communication units in a wireless communication system, the method comprising the steps of: transmitting a status enquiry from a first subscriber communication unit to a second subscriber communication unit; receiving said status enquiry at said second subscriber communication unit; and transmitting a status response message back to said first subscriber communication unit in response to said status enquiry.

[c2] The method of status enquiry according to Claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting a status response message is performed either automatically or in response to a second subscriber communication user input.

[c3] The method of status enquiry according to Claim 1, the method further comprising the step of: displaying at said first subscriber communication unit, upon receipt of the status response message, a status indication of said second subscriber communication unit.

[c4] The method of status enquiry according to Claim 1, the method further comprising the step of: displaying at said second subscriber communication unit, upon receipt of said status enquiry message, an indication that a status enquiry message has been received.

[c5] The method of status enquiry according to Claim 1, the method further comprising the steps of: transmitting said status enquiry message from said first subscriber communication unit via infrastructure in said wireless communication system to said second subscriber communication unit; and/or transmitting said status response message from said second subscriber communication unit via infrastructure in said wireless communication system to said first subscriber communication unit.

[c6] The method of status enquiry according to Claim 1, the method further

comprising the step of:

providing a user of said second subscriber communication unit with an ability to input status information to be included in a response to a status enquiry message.

[c7] The method of status enquiry according to Claim 1, wherein said status enquiry message is transmitted in the form of a short message service message.

[c8] The method of status enquiry according to Claim 7, the method further comprising the step of:
identifying said status enquiry message as being a status enquiry in a header portion of said short message service message.

[c9] The method of status enquiry according to Claim 1, the method further comprising the step of:
making a number of features of said status enquiry message or said status response message user-configurable.

[c10] The method of status enquiry according to Claim 9, wherein said user-configurable features include at least one of:
(i) an ability to transmit or receive status enquiry calls at a particular time of a day, or a particular day in a week,
(ii) whether a status enquiry message and/or a status enquiry response should be displayed to a user,
(iii) whether a subscriber communication unit is accepting calls,
(iv) whether a subscriber communication unit is accepting priority calls,
(v) when a subscriber communication unit will start accepting calls,
(vi) whether a subscriber communication unit is arranged to play, for example, a ring tone on receiving a call, or
(vii) whether a subscriber communication unit is muted.

[c11] The method of status enquiry according to Claim 1, the method further comprising the step of:
storing said status enquiry message and/or said status response message in either an element in the infrastructure of said wireless communication system

for subsequent re-transmittal to a requesting or destination subscriber unit or in said first or second subscriber communication unit for subsequent retrieval by a user.

- [c12] The method of status enquiry according to Claim 1, the method further comprising the step of:
tagging at least one phonebook entry or call register relating to said status enquiry message such that it can be transmitted at a time of a day, or periodically, to allow a user to be kept informed as to the availability of at least one other subscriber communication unit.
- [c13] A wireless communication system adapted to facilitate the status enquiry method steps of Claim 1.
- [c14] A subscriber communication unit adapted to perform any of the method steps of Claim 1.
- [c15] A subscriber communication unit comprising:
a controller for controlling transmission or reception of a status enquiry message or a status response message; and
a transmitter circuit, operably coupled to said controller, transmitting a status enquiry message or a status response message to another wireless remote communication unit.
- [c16] A subscriber communication unit according to Claim 15, the subscriber communication unit further comprising:
a controller for controlling transmission or reception of a status enquiry message or a status response message; and
a receiver circuit, operably coupled to said controller, receiving said status enquiry message or a status response message from another wireless remote communication unit.
- [c17] The subscriber communication unit according to Claim 15, the subscriber communication unit further comprising:
a memory device storing status information relating to at least one other subscriber communication unit.

[c18] The subscriber communication unit according to Claim 17, wherein the memory device stores a phone book feature or call register feature related to said or at least one other subscriber communication unit that a user of said subscriber communication unit may access.

[c19] The subscriber communication unit according to Claim 17, wherein the memory device stores a list of options in a menu accessible from said memory device, wherein said list of options includes a status enquiry option to initiate said status enquiry message.

[c20] The subscriber communication unit according to Claim 15, wherein the subscriber communication unit is one of: a cellular phone, a portable or mobile radio, a personal digital assistant or a laptop computer.

[c21] A subscriber communication unit, comprising:
a controller for controlling transmission or reception of a status enquiry message or a status response message; and
a receiver circuit, operably coupled to said controller, receiving said status enquiry message or a status response message from another wireless remote communication unit.

[c22] The subscriber communication unit according to Claim 21, the subscriber communication unit further comprising:
a memory device storing status information relating to at least one other subscriber communication unit.

[c23] The subscriber communication unit according to Claim 22, wherein the memory device stores a phone book feature or call register feature related to said or at least one other subscriber communication unit that a user of said subscriber communication unit may access.

[c24] The subscriber communication unit according to Claim 22, wherein the memory device stores a list of options in a menu accessible from said memory device, wherein said list of options includes a status enquiry option to initiate said status enquiry message.

[c25] The subscriber communication unit according to Claim 21, wherein the subscriber communication unit is one of: a cellular phone, a portable or mobile radio, a personal digital assistant or a laptop computer.

[c26] A storage medium storing processor-implementable instructions for controlling a processor to carry out the method of Claim 1.